THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) to (c) A number of reconciliation centres have been established in the State of Gujarat by Gujarat State Legal Services Authority for emicable settlement of disputes between the parties. Lok Adalats are now taking over the functions and role of reconciliation centres throught the country under the directions of the National Legal Srvices Authority established under the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987. The Lok Adalats have been provided a statutory base with the enforcement and extension of Chapter III of the said Act to all the States and U.T. Administrations. The Lok Adalats are now vested with the power of a Civil Court and the awards passed by the Lok Adalats are final, binding on the parties and are also non-appealable. Pursuant to the decision taken by the National Legal Services Authority at its first meeting held on 13th September, 1997 it has been decided to set up permanent and continuous Lok Adalats in all the Districts in the country for providing an additional forum to the litigants for conciliatory settlement of their disputes to relieve some burden from the regular courts. The permanent and continuous Lok Adalats would be reconciliation forum with a statutory basis. Efforts are also a foot to establish permanent and continuous Lok Adalats in the Government Departments, Statutory Bodies and Public Sector Undertakings which involve in a large number of legal matters.

(d) Does not arise.

Vacancies of Judges in various Courts

248. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of vacancies of Judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court have been lying vacant for long;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for delay in filling them up and the steps taken for the purpose so far?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) and (b) As on 1.11.1998, against the sanctioned strength of 587 Judges/Additional Judges of High Courts, 442 Judges/Additional Judges were in position, leaving 145 vacancies of Judges/Additional Judges to be filled up. As on 1.11.1998, against the sanctioned strength of 26 Judges, 19 Judges were in position in the Supreme Court of India, leaving 7 vacancies of Judges to be filled up. These posts became vacant, from time to time, due to retirement, transfer etc. of the Judges.

(c) The procedure for appointment of Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts involves consultations with several constitutional authorities. Every effort is being made to fill existing vacancies at the earliest.

Non payment of matured FDRs by Sunrise Securities Ltd.

249. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several complaints regarding non-payment of matured FDRs by Sunrise Securities Limited have been received by the Company Law Board;

(b) whether in an order the Company Law Board directed that Company to release payments in case of FDR No. 2846 (SSL), FDR No. 3339 (SSL) and FDR No. 6045 (LDL);

(c) whether even after this order, the Company has not released the said payments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and action proposed to be taken to make the company release the payments at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Company Law Board vide its order dated 12.05.1998 approved the repayment schedule in respect of 1437 outstanding deposits of this Non Banking Finance Company.

(c) and (d) RBI has informed that post dated cheques dated 28.11.1998 in respect of [illegible]Rs stated at part (b) of the Question have been issued by the company to the depositors on 15.11.1998.

Cumulative Losses of SEBs

250. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the cumulative losses incurred by the State Electricity Boards as at the end of March, 1998;

(b) the details of the factors responsible for these losses; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to improve the financial position of the SEBs in the country?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) The accounts of the State Electricity Boards are required to be forwarded to the Central Electricity Authority within six months of the close of the year to which the accounts relate. However, the accounts for the year 1997-98 from most of the SEBs have not been received. However, the cumulative losses of the 17 SEBs put together, based on the audited unaudited/provisional reports were Rs. 2002.84 crores and Rs. (−) 23130.77 crores with subsidy and without subsidy respectively at the end of March, 1997.

(b) The main reasons of the losses of the SEBs, inter-alia, include, the widening gap between the average cost of suply and realisation, especially with regard to the agricultural and domestic sectors; delay as well as inadequate revision of tariff; non-payment of rural electrification subsidy in cash by most of the State Governments; non-realisation of the dues by SEBs for sale of power; low levels of capacity utilisation of existing plants and high transmission & distribution losses.

(c) The establishment of the Regulatory Commissions, as provided in the Act passed by the Parliament, would lead to rationalisation of tariff and also provide for transparency in the provision of subsidies, wherever required. The State Government can exercise the option of providing subsidies, over and above, those recommended by the Regulator Commissions, on condition that the State Governments compensate the SEBs by providing adequate budgetary support. When tariffs are rationalised and budgetary support is provided, SEBs will improve their financial position.

Modernisation and upgradation of power stations in Gujarat

251. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any modernisation and upgradation of power stations in Gujarat has been undertaken during the last five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and whether Government propose to initiate the process of modernisation and upgradation of power stations in the state on priority to increase power production therein?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) A number of power stations in Gujarat were taken up for Renovation and Modernisation during the last five years. The details are as under:—